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Houghton, Michigan, was named. Some years since a souvenir of their early explorations was found on a large pine tree on the shore of Trout Lake, in Vilas County. Upon a blaze two feet long and one foot wide had been cut the inscription: "XIX T. J. Cram D. Houghton Aug. 11, 1841." The tree fell before the axe of the lumberman, but the slab containing the inscription was saved, and presented by John B. Mann, of Minocqua, to the museum of the State Historical Society.

In conclusion it may be noted that the long lines of lombardy poplars seen by the roadsides and farmsteads in the eastern part of the state were usually planted by the German immigrants. The Americans preferred elms, maples, and occasionally planted fir trees as wind-breaks. Some time during the decade of the seventies Mr. Adolph Meinecke brought willow cuttings from Silesia, from Haute Marne near Langres, France, and from Turin, Italy, for use in his manufacture of willow ware furniture. These he planted on his farm near Milwaukee, and they have grown and flourished. The Italian Silver Willow (*Salix viminalis*) and the Red Willow (*Salix rubra*) have proved most useful for manufacturing purposes.

I am delighted with the fund of material you sent me regarding the historic trees of Wisconsin. It will prove of valuable assistance to me in my research problem.

I take pleasure in telling you that the Historical Society of Wisconsin has evidently made a more thorough investigation of the subject for me than has any other historical society in the United States.

Thank you very heartily for your kind assistance.

OREN E. FRAZEE,
St. Cloud, Minn.

THE INDIAN TRADE OF ROCK RIVER VALLEY

I am trying to learn more about the fur trade that was carried on along Rock River, in this state, and in your *Chicago and the Old Northwest* I find so many references to the letter books of the Indian Department that I conclude that you visited Washington and made a personal examination of those books and other documents there. If I am right in this, I wish you would advise me if in your investigation you ever came upon any book or document showing to whom licenses to trade with the Indians in Illinois were granted prior to 1821. I have examined the reports of the Secretary of War showing the names of persons to whom licenses were issued in 1821 and subsequent years

to 1830, but I would like to know who was licensed to trade with the Indians at Grand Detour prior to 1821. I have indisputable evidence that there was a trader there.

WM. D. BARGE,
Chicago, Ill.

The Indian trade in the territory now known as Illinois and Wisconsin was in a very confused and disjointed condition after the War of 1812 until the abolition of the Factory System of the United States and the passage of the Act of Congress, May, 1822, regulating the issue of licenses. The British traders had no intention of relinquishing so valuable a trading ground, if by any species of subterfuge they could continue to control it. Illinois had been supplied for many years from Mackinac by the traders of the Michilimackinac and South West Fur Companies. The Rock River district was supplied from three main posts—the upper river from Green Bay, the central portion from Milwaukee, and the lower portion from the Mississippi River traders, some of whom went overland from the Des Moines Rapids, but most of whom had headquarters at Prairie du Chien. The Illinois River was a separate district and was supplied from Mackinac via Chicago.

The traders of the South West Company were the ones who formed the American Fur Company, and although under the presidency of an American, John Jacob Astor, with ostensible headquarters at New York, were in reality nearly all Canadians and brought their goods to Mackinac from Montreal. At the close of the war of 1812, the United States placed agents at Peoria, Prairie du Chien, Chicago, Green Bay, and Mackinac; and established United States factories at all these places except Peoria. About 1818 a branch factory connected with Prairie du Chien was placed at Fort Edwards, the end of the Des Moines Rapids. It was expected by these means that all the Indians would be supplied with American-made goods and would bring their furs to the factories for exchange. Agents were not, however, prohibited from issuing licenses to individual traders, and even the governors of the territories, as superintendents of Indian Affairs within their borders, assumed the right to issue licenses. This system, or lack of system, led to great confusion. A license issued by one agent might be revoked by another if the trader was found violating, as all traders did, the law against supplying liquor to

Indians. The first agent at Mackinac charged \$50 each for licenses; for this practice he was sharply rebuked. (See many documents in *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, XIX.) This was also complicated with issuing licenses to foreigners. At the close of the war Astor secured from the President a suspension of the rule against issuing licenses to foreigners, and the right was given each agent to use his discretion. This led to so many abuses that in 1818 the President issued an order that no foreigner should have a license. (*Wisconsin Historical Collections*, XX, 16, 17.) All kinds of subterfuges were resorted to; some American, an ex-soldier, or any employee of American citizenship took out the license, and the real trader accompanied him as an engagé until the trading ground was reached, when the disguise was thrown off and the usual relations of "bourgeois" and "engagé" resumed.

Thus it was not until 1822 that the license matter was reduced to a definite and dependable system.

In order to find the names of Rock River traders in the period from 1816 to 1822 you will be obliged to pick up the evidence bit by bit. In *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, XII, 154-159 is published a list for 1818 of the American Fur Company employees. Those of the Illinois River are listed separately but as Rock River was supplied from Green Bay, Milwaukee, and the lower Mississippi, one cannot be sure who were definitely located on Rock River. Our own opinion is that Rock River was largely supplied by what was known as the "drouine" method (see explanation *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, XIX, 200, note 86, and XX, p. xix). For the Madison or Four Lakes region we have no account of traders earlier than 1825, although no doubt traders had been here from the time of the French régime. Old Tibault of Koshkonong and Beloit, and LeSellier from Milwaukee who traded along the Rock from the Four Lakes south were the earliest traders of whom we have any knowledge. They were both probably in this region prior to the War of 1812.

THE FLAG OF THE FIRST WISCONSIN CAVALRY

I have recently been assisting to prepare the Civil War battle flags of Wisconsin regiments for their final resting place in glass cases, in the beautiful room allotted to the G. A. R. in this building. One of these flags (of my own regiment) is a state flag of blue silk,